

the CASB Quarterly

Letter from the CEO

“How much time off is enough to prepare for a CASB module evaluation?”

I have heard that question a lot lately from employers of CASB students. They tell me that many of their staff members request significant time off work in advance of writing their CASB module evaluations. And they are looking for some guidance from CASB on how to respond to those requests. They don't want to short-change the learning of their students, but at the same time they are questioning whether all of that time off is really educationally necessary. I thought I would share the CASB position on this issue with all CASB Quarterly readers.

Let me start by noting that the CASB program has been designed to minimize the amount of working days a student needs to be away from their employment. The only time away from employment that is actually required by CASB for each of Modules 1 through 5 are on the Friday of attendance at the Face-to-Face Interactive Sessions and in some cases a Friday for writing the module-end evaluation. Any other days off are at the discretion of the employer.


Employers may wish to provide their students with additional days off to help maximize their chances of success. For example it is important for a student to come into an evaluation rested and focused if they are to do their best. Working intensively on a difficult client assignment the day before the evaluation might get in the way of that. So we suggest that such a situation be avoided where possible.

We do encourage students to spend some time in advance of the evaluation date reviewing the tasks and readings from the module and writing one or two practice cases. However it is our view that in most cases a few evenings and some weekend time should be sufficient. Multiple days of cramming are not necessary and might even be counterproductive in a competency-based program such as CASB's.

We realize that this is a shift in thinking for those brought up in a typical university program. However, we consider our module-end evaluations to be simply an extension of the tasks performed in the module. If students have prepared their tasks diligently and internalized the feedback received from their facilitators, they should have developed sufficient competencies to achieve success on the evaluation.

To once again quote my predecessor John Brennan, PhD, FCA, “CASB evaluations are just another day in the office”.

John Gunn, MEd, FCA



CASB's new curriculum will begin in less than six weeks. Our curriculum redevelopment team has been very busy developing content, preparing new learning materials, and creating a new learning interface.

The new curriculum addresses the new standards for IFRS, ISA and private enterprise, provides the opportunity for students to work in different “roles”, offers greater emphasis on critical thinking and ties learning objectives for each module to the CA Competency Map.

More information on the new curriculum will be available soon.

Facilitator Training

In our last two sessions, CASB has trained 115 new facilitators, our largest group yet. There were so many people, in fact, that we added a third session to be held in a few weeks. It's full too!

We send our thanks to all of the individuals who attended these sessions and expressed an interest in working for CASB. And, we want to thank all of our facilitators for their hard work and dedication in helping our students succeed.

All CAs possess the basic skills and background experience to become involved in the CASB program.

Our next training sessions will be held in September.

And, we are looking for case reviewers. Module 6 case reviewer training will be held in June.

If you are interested in facilitating or case reviewing for CASB, you can view more information on our website at:

<http://www.casb.com/index.php?catid=81>

or email us at

contractpositions@casb.com

Angela Thorson, A New Facilitator!

Angela Thorson is a Regina based CASB graduate and a relatively new CASB Facilitator. We've been lucky enough to be working with her since the fall of 2008.

Angela articulated with the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan (PAS), and was promoted to an Audit Manager after she passed the UFE in 2004. Just recently, Angela resigned from her position so she could stay home with her girls, 3½-year-old Eliza, and one-year-old twins, Adria and Layla. That's the beauty of being a CASB Facilitator – we are accommodating to a variety of circumstances!

So, why is Angela interested in Facilitating? She told us, "While working at PAS, I helped students by reviewing the cases that they wrote in preparation for their module evaluations as well as the UFE, and I really enjoyed this aspect of student interaction. So, a friend of mine suggested I take the training and get involved. Right now, facilitating provides me with the flexibility I need to continue my career as well as juggle my responsibilities as a Mom."



Angela Thorson, CA

When we asked Angela if she would recommend that new CAs become facilitators, her response came quickly, "most definitely!"

She went on to say, "it is a very rewarding experience. I'm very grateful to the friend who recommended it to me! And, I have had great support from the CASB team."

So, as a previous CASB student and a Facilitator, we know Angela has some tips for student success. Sure enough, she told us, "Be committed and be disciplined! Your success depends on you. Chat sessions are so very important. As well, getting started on weekly assignments early in the week will help you prepare for those chat sessions."

We like to ask our Facilitators what becoming a CA means to them. Angela told us, "a CA gives you flexibility on what kind of work you do, where you work, how you work and so much more. CAs are professionals that are valuable in so many capacities with numerous transferable skills." We couldn't have said it better. So, along with Angela, we encourage you to keep at pursuing your CA designation, if you aren't there yet!

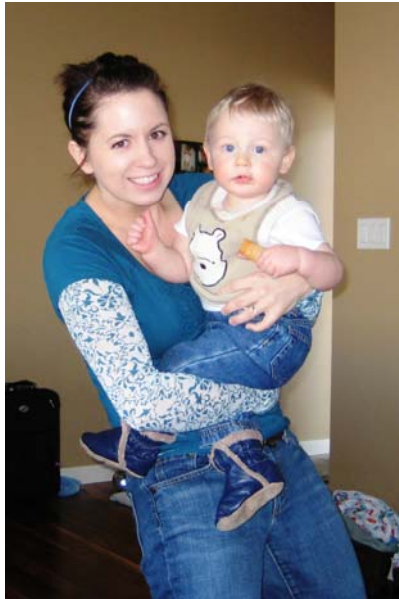
Angela's girls keep her very busy. In addition, she is a self-professed "Saskatchewan Roughrider fan" and tries to get to as many games as possible. And, she also enjoys digital scrapbooking and playing Wii.

Angela sounds like a lot of people we know, possibly cheering for different football team, though! Maybe becoming a CASB Facilitator is right for you?

Kelly Tuohey: A Student Who Believes in Detours

Kelly Tuohey, a Module 4 student from Kamloops, BC took the long route to becoming a CASB student.

“It took me a while to find the CA program,” was the first thing she told us! She studied general sciences at the now Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and then spent three years at BCIT studying Geomatics, or Land Surveying, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Eventually, she went back to TRU and finished her Business Administration degree.



Kelly Tuohey, and her adorable son, Wesley

So, why did Kelly eventually choose to become a CA? She told us, “I felt you couldn’t go very far in accounting if you didn’t have a designation. It opens up limitless possibilities once you have a designation and the CA program seemed to provide the most opportunity.” She also told us that being a CA will “provide security for the future, especially in this new economy.”

Kelly started CASB in October 2006. But, she had to take a break after Module 3. We’ll let her tell you why. “I found out I was pregnant the day I wrote the Module 2 exam. I continued to finish Module 3 and then took a break to finish my pregnancy and start motherhood.” Wow! Kelly began Module 4 in February and returns to her Staff Accountant position at KPMG LLP in Kamloops on April 1. So, was this difficult? “If it wasn’t for the encouraging support of

my other accountant-mom friends and my husband, I probably wouldn’t have been strong enough to continue with the CASB program. Support is everything whether it’s for studying, work or family. Don’t try to do it by yourself,” are her wise words of advice.

What tips can a busy Mom give us student success in CASB? “It is easy to become overwhelmed by the enormity of the UFE. Just take small bites. I always concentrate on the easiest tasks first. By the time I get to the hard ones, they don’t always seem so hard. And, ask for help when you need it.” Sounds reasonable to us!

In addition to CASB, Kelly is a certified SCUBA diver, is addicted to reading National Geographic, loves to swim and run, and is developing her kitchen skills, all while being baby oriented. We all know how busy most of our CASB students are, and Kelly is no different.

Did you take the long route to CASB? Maybe you had to pause in the middle of your studies for some reason. Keep at it. Just like Kelly, you will get there!

Important
DATE!

Registration Deadlines

March 16
Module 6

June 1
Module 2, 3 and 4

June 9
2009 UFE

Registration Checklist

Before submitting your registration, please ensure you have completed all the requirements. You can download the *CASB Registration Checklist*, located under “Forms” at casb.com.

CASB Surveys:

Please be judicious in using the opt-out link in survey emails. If you use this link, you will no longer receive any surveys, unless you reinstate yourself. In doing so, you may miss mini surveys that directly impact you.

Instead, you can close and delete the emails containing surveys you do not wish to participate in.

If you have previously opted out, and want to be reinstated, please click on this link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/OptOut.aspx> and fill out the required information.

2nd Annual Western CA Case Competition

The 2nd annual CA Case Competition was held March 6 and 7 in Calgary Alberta. Two third-year commerce students from Simon Fraser University, Andy Leung and Raymond Zhang, took first place. The other post-secondary institutions represented were the universities of British Columbia, Calgary, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Regina and Manitoba.

The CA Case Competition is designed to promote the Chartered Accountancy profession as an attractive career path and give students a taste of the type of work done by a CA. "The experience of simulating a real life solution that CAs face daily on the job was definitely one that was exciting, but stressful at the same time! Being in a time pressured environment to solve problems for clients are what CAs seem to do, and this competition exposed me to these aspects of the job," said Raymond. And Andy followed up by saying, "The competition allowed me to obtain a deeper understanding of the daily situations and problems faced by a chartered accountant. I believe that this experience definitely increased my enthusiasm in becoming a CA."

In total, 14 students, two from seven of Western Canada's universities, competed in this 24-hour competition. Each team was assigned an accounting case study with a problem that they were required to review and analyze then determine a solution. After a long night of evaluation, the students had to present their solution to a panel of CA judges the following morning. Many had less than four hours of sleep! The best advice Raymond can give next year's competitors is, "work hard, and prepare not to sleep much!"



CA Case Competition Participants, Coaches and Judges



From Left to Right: Anne MacDonald, CA, SFU Coach, Drew McDonald, CA, Lead Judge, Raymond Zhang and Andy Leung, SFU Students, and Sara Jiminez, CA and Elmiem Wingert, CA, Judges

Of the competition, Lead Judge, Drew McDonald, CA said, "the CA case competition provided a professional forum for the students to impress the judges and the crowd with their insight and business acumen, and, in the judges' opinions, all the presentations exceeded that threshold," said Drew. "We would be proud to welcome every one of the 14 students to the CA profession." He went on to comment, the winning team from Simon Fraser University had an MBA-quality presentation that highlighted what CAs do best—helping clients make decisions that are both practical and forward-looking."

Both Andy and Raymond have plans of becoming CAs. Said Andy, "becoming a chartered accountant has been a goal of mine ever since I took my first accounting course. I am truly intrigued by the stories that each number can tell me." And Raymond said, "One aspect of the com-

CA's Write On

Some "All" Words and Expressions

When you are writing for business, keep these "all" words and expressions in mind:

all of - *I ate all of the cookies (Editor's Note – I'm not very impressed you didn't leave any for me!). The "of" is unnecessary. Better: I ate all the cookies.*

alright – There is no such word as "alright." There is the phrase **all right**. *Is it all right if I go out to buy more cookies?*

already - This word is an adverb. *Too late! The stores are already closed.*

all ready - This is a phrase. *I was all ready to go to the store and buy cookies.*

altogether - This word is an adverb meaning "entirely." *I am altogether bothered by the lack of cookies.*

all together - This is a phrase. *I am keeping your group all together so you quit eating my cookies.*

alot – This is not a word. The expression is **a lot**, two words. *I like cookies a lot. You CAs sure eat a lot of cookies.* There is a word **allot**, a verb meaning "to divide into lots." *When I plan, I only allot myself one cookie a day.*

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petition that I definitely took to heart was the fact that CAs are not only accountants that deal with numbers, but they also handle the everyday problems of their clients. I learned that identifying and solving issues from a user perspective ultimately provides the best overall value for the clients of chartered accountants."

Of the experience Andy told us, "One of the most memorable experiences I had at this competition was an impromptu dinner with fellow competitors. It was a great opportunity to meet students across Canada that wants to strive for the same career goals." And Raymond summed up the experience by saying, "I'm sure that I can say, on behalf of all competitors, that we definitely had a fun, educational, and rewarding time during the competition. The CA School of Business did a great job organizing and hosting this event, and I thank them for all the hard work they've put in. I would definitely recommend students to join this competition if given the opportunity!"

*We expect to hold the 3rd Annual Case Competition in early 2010 in Saskatchewan.
Stay tuned for more details.*

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